FST-FA04-0201276-S : SUPERIOR COURT

NOWACKI, SUZANNE : JD STAMFORD/NORWALK

VS. : AT STAMFORD

NOWACKI, MICHAEL : JUNE 29, 2009

* ordered on appeal by defendant ST-133

B E F O R E:

THE HONORABLE ROBERT MALONE

APPEARANCES:

REPRESENTING THE PLAINTIFF:

Kevin Collins, Esq. Law Offices of Kevin Collins

REPRESENTING THE DEFENDANT:

Michael Nowacki Pro Se

> Paul J. McKenna, CER Court Recording Monitor

> Transcribed by: McKenna

[begins at: 10:27]

THE COURT: There was a matter that was moved over to this Court from Judge Harrigan's court. And I just have a question on Nowacki versus Nowacki, if I'm pronouncing that correctly.

MR. COLLINS: Yes, you are, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I note that it was filled out and I do believe it's not an agreement; it's an argument, is that correct?

MR. COLLINS: It is, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Approximately how long will that take?

MR. COLLINS: Your Honor, I would suggest no more than 15 minutes.

MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I would suggest it's going to be substantially longer than that.

MR. COLLINS: Well, I think Your Honor needs to hear us on that issue. And Ms. Bernier, who's the GAL, needs to leave soon. So if the Court -- I mean, Mr. Nowacki thinks this is an evidentiary hearing; that's why he thinks it's longer. But it's not, in my mind, an evidentiary hearing.

THE COURT: All right. Then why don't we do -- whose motions are they?

MR. COLLINS: They're mine, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Why doesn't everybody come up and let me take a look through the motions

that are pending, all right? 1 MR. COLLINS: Yes, Your Honor. 2 3 MS. BERNIER: For the record, Your Honor, Lacey Bernier, prior GAL in this case. 4 5 THE COURT: Prior GAL? 6 MS. BERNIER: Yes. I'm not on the record yet. 7 (noise obliterates) the website. THE COURT: Had this matter gone to judgment? 8 9 Is that the situation? 10 MS. BERNIER: This is post-judgment, Your 11 Honor. 12 THE COURT: Approximately how long ago did it 13 go to judgment? 14 MR. COLLINS: Four years ago, Your Honor. 15 THE COURT: Happy Anniversary. Okay. So we 16 have approximately four years ago, so you're out of the case at this particular point in time? 17 18 MS. BERNIER: That's correct, Your Honor. MR. COLLINS: Well, that's not what Mr. Nowacki 19 20 thinks. 21 MR. NOWACKI: Well Your Honor, there were 22 certain provisions written into the parenting plan 23 where Lacey was accepted and signed in the parenting 24 plan that she would be the first court of appeal on 25 any issues in regards to the execution of this 26 parenting plan. And inasmuch as she has not gone to 27 court and requested to be removed in her role as

Guardian, and she has expressed a desire to do so, my feeling is that the reason why that was written into the parenting plan is to avoid a matter like this that can be brought up at a later point in time where we have not exhausted every alternative to meet with the Guardian Ad Litem who operates in the best interests of the children.

THE COURT: All right. What provision of the - was it an agreement or was it an argued
matter/trial and then decided by a Court? Was it -which one was it? Which way was it, sir?

MR. COLLINS: Your Honor, there was a separation agreement filed.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. COLLINS: Mr. Nowacki is referring to a provision which, although the exact terminology may not have been used, he's referring to something akin to a gatekeeper. That's a different circumstance for Ms. Bernier than being GAL.

For the record, Attorney Kevin Collins for the plaintiff, Suzanne Nowacki.

Your Honor, to make a long story short, the motions we're here on today are:

I have filed a motion -- two motions for modification brought by way of orders to show cause. They are scheduled for August $3^{\rm rd}$. One of the motions for modification is for a modification of

the custody arrangement in this case. The other is for a modification of child support.

The motions that are on this morning are more or less -- not more or less -- they are the preliminary motions which are often commonplace and required as a predicate to such motions. The motions I'm proceeding on today are a motion for a psychological evaluation; a motion for an appointment of an attorney for the minor children; and a motion for referral to Family Relations.

Those are the motions which are on today, which to my mind, are legal matters and that's why I represented to the Court I can see nothing longer than 15 minutes or so this morning because those are not evidentiary motions.

As a collateral matter, I know that Mr. Nowacki

-- I know that Ms. Bernier claims as follows -- and

I think correctly so -- that according to the court
rules, after there being six months of inactivity,
appearances are negated, if you will, from the
record. She is not, to my knowledge, still listed
as the GAL in this matter.

However, Mr. Nowacki -- despite her entreaties that she is not longer the GAL -- and in fact, these children are of a sufficient age and discretion where they do not require a GAL. She does not desire to continue to serve in that capacity. I

believe I speak correctly for (indiscernible).

MS. BERNIER: Yes. Your Honor, this is four -three, four years post-judgment. These children,
Tim and Kerry, are ages 12 and 14 right now. They
certainly are old enough to have an attorney, and no
longer needing a Guardian Ad Litem.

MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I have spoken to both children in regards to their preference. And both children have said to their father, in very tearful ways, that they do not want to be put in a situation where one parent is going to be awarded the custody of these children.

I have been a very involved parent in this process and I believe if you check the parenting agreement, there are stipulations here that Lacey did agree to. There was no time limitation assigned to that which is in the parenting plan. So I believe that since there's been no effort on behalf of the plaintiff to meet with the Guardian Ad Litem, this hearing shouldn't be started until we've gone through the process and made an earnest effort.

Because she has background, it's more efficient to do it that way. And it's in the best interest of the children to do it that way.

It's Point 31 in the parenting plan, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Well, in reading

through the parenting plan that was incorporated by reference into the judgment, together with the stipulation of the parties -- first of all, Ms.

Bernier, as her appointment or representation -- your -- not representation -- but as Guardian Ad Litem, much like someone who is appointed as an attorney for a minor child or counsel for parties -- at the end of six months, automatically, their appearance is removed from the formal docket.

And I am looking at the ages of the children, which is 12 and 14. You have to take a look at that in conjunction with 31, which discusses, "Should a conflict arise between the parents involving a major decision regarding either child" -- and I certainly understand that someone could interpret that to mean a request to amend or modify, if you will, the judgment regarding children.

But I interpret that as to mean if there was a decision regarding a school or regarding some other activity -- something that was going on between the parents or disagreements between the parents about a child's activity, about a child's rules that are being instituted within a particular home -- anything of that nature, then in that event, Ms. Bernier would act as gatekeeper.

With regard to the children's ages at this point -- what grades are these children in? I take

it the 14 is either in eighth grade or just finished 1 the first year of high school. Which would that be? 2 MR. COLLINS: One is going into freshman year; 3 one is going into the seventh grade. 4 5 MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I would like to also comment that I think a major decision for the 6 7 children -- about a change in custody -- is a significant change in their life. 8 9 THE COURT: No one's denying that it wouldn't 10 be a significant change in their --11 MR. NOWACKI: And that they --12 THE COURT: -- but I take this not that she's 13 to be the -- to try and arbitrate, should there be a motion to modify custody. If that was the intent, 14 15 that certainly could have been in there, but it 16 isn't. And it seems to me that if there is a motion made for modification, which I don't know if that's 17 18 in here at this particular point --19 MR. COLLINS: It is, Your Honor. It's an order 20 to show cause and has been to Mr. Nowacki at this point and it is scheduled on that calendar for 21 August 3rd. 22 23 MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, May I comment? 24 THE COURT: Yes. 25 MR. NOWACKI: Ms. Bernier, in fact, did not 26 resign from her active participation in this case.

As recently as February of this year, she was

collecting fees in regards to her involvement in this case. So to suggest that Ms. Bernier, suddenly, wants to resign from her role, when in fact she was taking money for both of us for her services as late as February, would suggest to me that she elected, at the point in time, to get involved in certain matters that were ongoing in the case, that she did not resign her role. that the going gets tough, suddenly now, Ms. Bernier is indicating that she no longer wants to be involved in this situation, after she has been accepting fees that existed also in the period of time that was post-six months, that also date back to February of 2005. And I believe, Your Honor, I have the receipts here from my checkbook that can validate that fees were paid. I wrote a check to Lacey for \$400 in excess of her fees because I was anticipating that her continuing involvement -- and she did cash that check.

THE COURT: All right. That being the case, sir, and that being said, again, her formal appearance in the file, just as prior counsel who may have represented you or counsel who may have represented your former spouse, their appearance, if you will, lapses automatically.

She -- Ms. Bernier may have been acting in terms of questions that may have come up -- as I

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but at this particular age, going into a motion for modification -- there's no pre-condition, on a motion for modification, that she would act as gatekeeper. And if there is a motion for modification, which it appears there is at this particular point, the appropriate person to -- if someone is going to be appointed, it would be an attorney for a minor child -- or minor children -- because they're of an age where they now, in terms of age -- and I haven't heard anything that leads me to believe that they have any incapacities or limitations mentally or emotionally -- that being the case, an attorney would be appointed -- or perhaps should be appointed for the minor children.

And again, I don't see a motion in here for that, but that would require --

MR. COLLINS: There is a motion, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Is it -- where is it? I see. We do have one, number 196. Now, I should point out that with regard to motions 196 and 197; one which deals with an attorney for the minor children to be appointed and the other for counsel fees --

MR. COLLINS: I'm not proceeding on that today,
Your Honor.

THE COURT: Because both of those would require financial affidavits for me to be able to look at

those.

MR. COLLINS: Right. Well, to that end, Your Honor, we are in the middle of a hearing before Judge Novack on two things.

Mr. Nowacki has brought a motion for contempt against Ms. Sullivan, formerly Nowacki. And that hearing is scheduled to reconvene on July 8th. So there are fresh financial affidavits in this matter, which I believe should be in the court file anyway. We were last in court around the third week of April. So there are financial affidavits.

I'm not seeking counsel fees today but I am seeking the appointment of an AMC; I'm seeking a referral for a psychological evaluation of the parties and the children, perhaps; and I'm further seeking a referral to Family Relations, which is typical of a matter like this.

I would point out, Your Honor, that since the motion for modification of custody is on in early August, these preliminary matters can be started at this time, rather than waiting till August to have this done, which is why I proceeded as I have.

I would further point out that the typical way of handling this is for me to consult with other counsel in order to arrive at a mutually agreeable psychological or psychiatric evaluator or attorney for the minor children. The problem with that is,

Your Honor, Mr. Nowacki has, in the last week or month or whatever -- and I've only been in this case three-and-a-half months or so -- he told me as recently as yesterday, the grievance that he's filing against me should be filed by the end of business today. He's calling the IRS on me; he's calling the IRS on my client. He has reported Attorney Tom Colin -- or my predecessor in this case who he drove out of the case -- he's reported him for passing him too closely on the way to the men's room. Last week, he has reported my client's husband to the New Canaan police for looking at him meanly on the train on the way home from New York.

The upshot is I need the Court to make these decisions. I cannot discuss these with Mr. Nowacki. It is impossible to discuss things with Mr. Nowacki, which goes to the sum and substance of why coparenting has become an impossibility in this matter.

He is threatening. He is bullying. And we need to address this. And I need the Court to do it.

THE COURT: Right. Well -- here's -
MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I would like to
respond to counselor, if that's appropriate.

THE COURT: Fine.

MR. NOWACKI: I find it fascinating that this

case and this parenting plan worked fine for fourand-a-half years. And then it's not until, at which
point in time, that Suzanne Sullivan was promoted in
March of 2008, received a substantial raise in that
point in time. In August, I approached Suzanne
about sitting down and trying to resolve a
reordering of the percentages of the contributions.
And then she refused to do so.

I tried very hard to keep this out of court.

There was no mechanisms that are available to me to get access to the information and that quite truthfully, I am just appalled here, as to how Mr.

Collins can present certain information here, which is not true to the Court and did so in front of Judge Novack two weeks ago, all right?

And that the reason why I am representing myself, Your Honor, and as an advocate for my children, is because I was forced to spend \$150,000 to defend myself. That is money that could have sent one of our children halfway through college, based on the current rates of inflation. I am here today to represent the very best interests, not the best interests of my children. And the suggestions of Mr. Collins that there shouldn't be adjustments in the modifications in the percentages of the child-related expenses, is at the very nexus of this argument that he makes here today.

It's only until which point in time that
Attorney Collins realizes there is no other avenue
that he can pursue except to put the children into
the ante table of this high-stakes poker game. And
I am offended by it. And I'm offended by his
suggestions that this father has, in some way, not
been a stand-up individual to live up to every
aspect of my involvement in the execution of the
separation agreement and the parenting plan.

Rulings and Findings on Motions Heard This Day

THE COURT: All right. Well, I'm going to -on the motion for the attorney for the minor
children, I'm going to grant that. And I'm going to
take it on the papers as to who to appoint. And
that will require, also, some input from that person
in terms of what retainer they would want -- hourly
fees -- and such. And so I will take the papers on
the appointment for the minor children.

With regard to the motion for a Family Relations [sic] evaluation and study, I am going to grant that.

And with regard to the psychological evaluation, I note that the defendant -- Mr.

Collins, when you were presenting your argument, you had mentioned parties and yet I look at your motion and it discusses that the defendant undergo a psychological evaluation.

MR. COLLINS: Your Honor, that's the form -but I think that -- I've been doing this a long
time. I've yet to see one party ordered evaluated
and not the other. So I think that a mutual
evaluation is in order here. I think the children
need to be part of the process too, but I'll leave
that to the Court.

THE COURT: I'm not going to order that the children undergo any form of evaluation until an attorney for the minor children has had an opportunity to be appointed and have an opportunity to get into the fray and to meet with these children or potentially get some records of these children. I don't want to put them through psychological evaluation questioning. I just don't see the need for that at this point.

MR. COLLINS: No argument, Your Honor. No argument.

THE COURT: I'm not saying that somewhere down the line -- if there was some sort of problem that became apparent, that's something different.

With regard to the evaluation by both parties, if, in the event that that should be ordered, and we get into the issue over what psychological evaluator, if they're appointed -- if you have a hearing that's looking again -- let's think this thing through --

Family Relations -- I don't know that they can 1 complete an evaluation by August. 2 MR. COLLINS: They cannot, Your Honor. And I'm 3 not looking to expedite it for the August date. 4 Ι 5 don't anticipate us having a custody hearing on August 3rd. 6 7 THE COURT: I think it's highly unlikely. MR. COLLINS: Right. And so --8 9 THE COURT: Because I'm looking at a Family 10 Relations study. I'm also thinking if you're going 11 to have a psychological evaluation done of both 12 parties, the issue becomes, again, who bears the 13 cost of that or if they divide that equally, and who 14 is going to do the evaluation, and how promptly can 15 they do that. 16 MR. COLLINS: Your Honor, I'm only suggesting 17 that -- psychological evaluation, obviously, are not 18 done at the Family Relations level. They'd be doing 19 the custody study --20 THE COURT: Right. I understand that. 21 MR. COLLINS: But I would suggest that -- I 22 consider the August 3 date more of a control date 23 than anything else. So I'm fully aware but --24 THE COURT: All right. I just want to make 25 that clear on the record for both parties. It's --26 I will take the motion for psychological

evaluation of the parties -- for both parties.

can take that on the papers for determination of 1 whether someone should be appointed and if so, who? 2 And again, with regard to the cost factors, I can 3 take a look -- was there financial affidavits 5 submitted? MR. COLLINS: There were, Your Honor --6 7 MR. NOWACKI: Well Your Honor, those affidavits are out of date. 8 9 MR. COLLINS: Well, that would not be my 10 suggestion, Your Honor, because if they're out of date, then we have to file a new financial affidavit 11 before July 8th. Those are the affidavits upon which 12 13 Judge Novack it going to rely next week. So I would 14 suggest that if they're stale for these purposes, 15 they're stale for all purposes. 16 THE COURT: What were the date of those? MR. COLLINS: April 22nd --17 18 MR. NOWACKI: Twenty-second. There's been 19 bonus information for me that needs to be updated in 20 There's money been contributed to the children's 529 plans. There's a lot of information 21 22 that is, in fact, not up to date in those. And by 23 the way Mr. Collins, I will have to you, as required, five days before the hearing on July 8th, 24 25 an updated financial affidavit. THE COURT: All right. Well, let's do this --26

MR. NOWACKI: -- as you're required to do as

well.

THE COURT: July 8th. Let's do this: Are there going to be revised financial affidavits?

MR. COLLINS: I don't know that I need to revise ours but if Mr. Nowacki's position is that he's going to revise his, then his position is it's stale.

THE COURT: All right. What I'm --

MR. COLLINS: I would then suggest, however, for Mr. Nowacki's purposes -- because Mr. Nowacki veraciously reads the rules of professional conduct, the practice book, and the Connecticut General Statutes -- although he typically misreads them -- I would suggest that the five-day rule applies and since we're on for the 8th, I should be in receipt of his revised financial affidavit no later than this Friday, July 3rd.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. NOWACKI: Not a problem.

THE COURT: What I'm going to ask is if I can receive -- I need to receive updated financial affidavits promptly so I can take that into consideration on taking the papers with regard to the psychological evaluation and with regard to the appointment of attorney for the minor children

With regard to the psychological evaluations, you've heard Mr. Collins indicate that even though

his motion is directed to you, sir, he's really essentially saying for both parties. Do you have any position with regard to that?

MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I believe that this effort is strictly an attempt to bring financial pressure to me to not follow through with the motions for modifications to be heard on July 8th. I have waited a very long time to get the adjustments on the children's expenses.

Suddenly -- all of a sudden, at which point in time, that the plaintiff is now going to be responsible for a greater portion of the children's expenses. The only way that there can be, then, an undoing of what was agreed to four-and-one-half years ago when we separated and signed the parenting agreement. And then on June 29th, we then signed the separation agreement. And for that period of time, I have been paying for 65 percent of approximately \$60,000 worth of expenses. And the plaintiff is now with 35 percent.

So what happens then? I file motions for modification. We get assigned to Judge Harrigan, who heard the pre-trial hearing back in April so he had to recuse himself from the case. We then had to wait for a new appointment time. The day before that hearing, Attorney Collins files an objection to the production of certain information that was vital

to be delivered to me for that April 28th hearing.

We began, then, instead, a hearing that was on the contempt issues, which Judge Novack, at the end of about two hours worth of testimony, asked us to please join those motions together for a hearing that was scheduled on June $24^{\rm th}$.

A notice came out from the Court indicating that Mr. Collins had a conflict, according to what I understand from Jeff Diamond, and that now gets pushed to July the $8^{\rm th}$.

So during this period of time, most of the controversy that has arisen is about the ongoing expenses for the children that relates to my income being down over 25 percent during this period of time. And the plaintiff ends up making almost double what she was making at the point in time of the divorce.

As a result, certain choices have to be made for the children in regards to Mr. Collins' contention that the only order that is in place is a 65/35 split on these expenses. And most of the tension that has existed in our relationship, in regards to the best interests of the children, relate to financial matters because the delays in the process of this Court.

In addition to that Your Honor, as part of the discovery, which the counselor intended to deliver

to me, he handed over papers that were delivered on 1 my front door step in a driving rainstorm, 2 unbeknownst to him. All of those papers were 3 unrecognizable. They had to be dried out. I was 5 told I was going to be receiving additional copies of that material. And Attorney Collins has 6 7 indicated, on at least a half-a-dozen occasions, we'll get that to you right away. 8 9 So what happens? Nothing happens. Nothing 10 happens. And as a result, we have to make 11

adjustments. So during a portion of my discovery, what do I find out?

Well, I find out, as part of the financial affidavits that we file quarterly, on behalf of the children's expenses, that the plaintiff had, in fact, submitted fraudulent expenses to me. And I had been paying for 65 percent of her husband's --

THE COURT: Sir, I am going to interrupt you --

MR. NOWACKI: -- healthcare costs.

THE COURT: -- only because my question was: do you have an objection or do you have some common with regard to the psychological evaluation of both parties?

MR. NOWACKI: I do.

THE COURT: So you do object to it?

MR. NOWACKI: I do object.

THE COURT: And is the basis of your objection,

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sir -- just so I understand it -- I'm taking this on the papers -- but just so I understand it, is the basis of your objection -- what I'm hearing is that -- I believe -- if I'm incorrect, I'm sure you'll advise me -- but it seems to me what your position is is that a psychological evaluation is not being conducted for the purpose of truly obtaining a psychological evaluation but rather, that it's being used as a financial weapon?

MR. NOWACKI: Absolutely.

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THE COURT: All right. I understand your position. I'll take this on the papers and --

MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, may I just -- I have 45 letters that have been written for me for today's hearing that I would like to submit to this Court. People that have volunteered to write me a letter to talk about my parenting skills. And the suggestion that there is a need for this process to be done and this agreement to be undone, is simply outrageous to not just me but to the 45 people, my family, my family's heritage, and the values that my family stands for in truth and honesty, integrity, and commitment. I have lived up to every single letter of this agreement, until which point in time that I discovered that I had been paying fraudulent expenses for my ex-wife's husband's healthcare That is fraud. costs.

And the day before Judge Novack's hearing -the day before -- finally, after four months of
conversations with Attorney Collins -- what arrived
in the car the Monday before the short calendar
hearing? A check for, ostensively, \$1,850 from the
plaintiff -- from the plaintiff -- because she
finally acknowledged the level of the fraudulent
activity that she had been engaged in.

I find it outrageous that people can sit here and make a judgment without all of the facts here.

THE COURT: Well, sir, the letters would be inappropriate. The question and the issue that I was going to would be the psychological evaluations. And it would appear, based upon your most recent statements of allegations, potentially fraud and other wrongdoings -- that isn't before me. But perhaps that would be something that a psychological evaluation would be most appropriate for.

So I'll take this on the papers. I cannot take your letters. That would not be relevant to that issue. It may be relevant to a modification.

However, I should point out to you, sir -- and I don't represent you; I cannot give you legal advice -- but I suspect that you would find that they would not be admissible because it would be hearsay. It may be necessary, if so, to provide some of those letters to Family Relations when they conduct their

evaluation, or perhaps to have some of those individuals present at a hearing.

In any event, I'll take this on the papers --

MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, I had someone here today to speak on my behalf --

THE COURT: Well, that's wonderful but -MR. NOWACKI: And I was told by Attorney
Collins that that would not be permissible.

THE COURT: Sir, again, I'm not hearing the motion for modification.

Ms. Bernier --

MS. BERNIER: Yes.

THE COURT: -- you are not involved with this file. And as I indicated to you, or indicated on the record earlier, that your appearance, for formal appearance sake and hearing sake, you're not involved with this in that your appearance has lapsed. And at this point, with the motion for modification, it really is more appropriate, based on the age of the children, that they have an attorney for a minor child appointed for them -- or children -- appointed for them.

I will take that on the papers and no doubt will be appointing someone, but I want to think through who would be a proper person, and as well, taking a look at the financial affidavits.

MS. BERNIER: Thank you.

1	THE COURT: Thank you.
2	MR. COLLINS: Thank you, Your Honor.
3	THE COURT: And I do need those updated
4	financial affidavits.
5	MR. COLLINS: Yes, Your Honor.
6	THE COURT: Thank you.
7	MR. NOWACKI: Your Honor, there was a request,
8	made from Norm Roberts, that this file be delivered
9	downstairs so I may get a copy of the order that
10	Judge Novack made for production, which Attorney
11	Collins has refused to give to me.
12	MR. COLLINS: I don't know Your Honor, I was
13	in conversation with Attorney Colon.
14	THE COURT: All files go back downstairs at
15	some point, sir.
16	MR. NOWACKI: They asked that I specifically
17	request that it be sent down immediately, so I
18	THE COURT: Well no doubt, we'll be taking a
19	break in a short time and it will be going down.
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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcription of an electronic recording done to the best of my ability, held in the above-entitled matter heard before the Honorable Robert Malone, Judge at Superior Court in Stamford, Connecticut on the 29th day of June, 2009. Dated this 1st day of July, 2009, at Stamford, Connecticut.

Paul J. McKenna, CET Transcribing Monitor

Note: This document has been edited in accordance with the English Guide for Court Reporters, second edition, by Lillian I. Morson.